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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(Digest of Homemakers' Chats - May 10 through June 4, 1943. To be remimeographed and distributed to home demonstration agents. Not for broadcasting.)

Monday, May 10, - Thick and Thin. Refers to saving in use of vegetable seeds and plants, garden space, fertilizer, dusts and sprays, tools, time, and labor. Avoid sowing seed too thick. Thin promptly such crops as chard and beets. Carrots, parsnips, spinach, collards, lettuce, and turnips must be planted thick, as so many fail to come up as good plants. Some thinnings can be transplanted, others used for salad.

Tuesday - Question Box. "How get new pressure cooker?" Get application blank from farm rationing committee of your county or from a store selling pressure cookers. Fill out and mail or take to the rationing committee. They will notify you whether you are eligible to buy one or not. If eligible, locate the cooker you want to buy, get a certificate of purchase from the rationing committee, and give this certificate to the store when you buy the cooker.

"How about fuel for kerosene stove for canning?" Your local ration board will allot extra oil for use in canning. Apply to your ration board for it.

"Should I can greens in a pressure canner?" Yes. Use a pressure canner for spinach and all other nonacid vegetables. Canning specialists say greens are some of the least successfully canned vegetables because of the necessary long and high degree of heating. Use fresh greens as long as possible.

Wednesday - Small electric appliances. Refers to "Care and Use of Your Small Appliances," available from REA, St. Louis, Mo., suggests 3 rules: (1). Keep your electrical appliances handy; you'll use them oftener. (2). Make them give you extra service; use them for extra jobs - many will do several different jobs. (3). Give them extra care. Guard against overheating, falls, protect them from dust, moisture, oil, acid, and salt. Take care of cords.

Thursday - Question Box. "Do onions deserve space in a small garden?" Yes. They are valuable for their flavor, as seasoning for other valuable foods.

"How plant green beans?" Plant scientists say green beans are not particularly sensitive to the soil they grow in, if it is well drained, reasonably fertile, and not too heavy or hard to push through. Cover bean seeds no more than an inch in heavy soils or an inch and a half in sandy soil.

"What vegetables need fertilizer most?" Leafy green vegetables should get first priority. They should get three side dressings. Tomatoes and green beans may profit from one application.

Friday - Saving the Products of the Victory Garden. United States Department of Agriculture advises canning the garden products you can't preserve so well in any other way. Some vegetables, root particularly, store well. Some can be dried, brined, or pickled. Where available, frozen storage is a favorite way to save many foods.

Monday. May 17. Wartime fruit canning. Supplying a plentiful amount of home-canned fruit is one of the best and most economical ways to make sure your family has enough fruit, especially when fresh fruit is scarce. Check over your canning equipment and be sure you have the jars, tops, and other essentials. If you need new canning equipment, don't wait until the fruit is ripe to buy it. You can stretch your canning sugar in many ways. A little sugar helps fruit hold color and flavor, but isn't necessary to keep fruit from spoiling, so you can put up some fruit unsweetened and add sugar when you serve.

Tuesday. Question Box. "Is a single family eligible for a canner?" No regulation specifies that community groups have preference over families in allotment of pressure canners. The Government plan is to place each canner where it will be most useful--where it will put up the most food.

"How get kerosene oil for canning on oil stove?" At present (early May) ration boards are allowing extra oil to people with no other stove to use for canning. However, these wartime regulations are subject to change.

"Should I test rubber rings for canning by stretching them?" No. Wartime rubber rings are made mostly from reclaimed rubber. Put them on carefully, following the manufacturer's directions, and stretch as little as possible.

"How can I straighten out the bottom of aluminum pans that are bent and bulged?" Use two smooth sturdy blocks of wood, one small enough to fit inside the pan. Heat the blocks of wood and also the bottom of the pan. Turn pan upside down on one hot block and put the other hot block directly over it on the pan. Tap the block with a hammer. Repeat until the entire bottom is smooth again. Prevent these bulges--avoid sudden changes in temperature, don't set an empty pan on the high heat of the stove. Don't knock kitchenware around; it is too valuable.

Wednesday. Fats and Oils. "Why are fats and oils so important right now?" They have three big jobs to do in wartime. They are vital energy foods needed in large quantities by fighting men, are important in making munitions and implements of war, and are necessary in the manufacture of many products civilians need other than food. Fortunately, fats and oils are interchangeable. One can be used in place of another. Everyone on the home front needs to use fats and oils sparingly. Not one bit should go to waste. Most left-over fat is useful for cooking. Store carefully.

Thursday. Question Box. "Should I grow herbs in a victory garden?" Herbs are useful mostly for seasoning. If you have extra space, you might put in herbs for home-grown seasonings. Some are perennials. Plant so you won't have to disturb next year. Herbs that are annuals must go into the ground each spring: Parsley, summer savory, basil, sweet marjoram, and dill, nasturtium and anise. Five useful perennial herbs: Sage, mint, thyme, chives, and tarragon.

"Is it safe to use juice from home-canned tomatoes or use the tomatoes themselves cold without first heating?" You do not need to heat canned tomatoes or juice before using. The more you heat tomatoes, the more likely you are to lose some of the flavor.

"How make the same old winter vegetables appetizing?" Recommends folder, Root Vegetables in Low-Cost Meals. Try combinations, adding flavoring foods.

Friday. Weeds for the Dinner Table. Discusses wild greens. Some wild greens are: Lamb's quarters (also called wild spinach), red-root pigweed; purslane; pink milkweed; plantain; chicory (also called blue sailors); wild or summer mustard.

Monday. May 24, 1943 - Victory Farm Volunteers. Town and city boys and girls of high-school age who are volunteering for work on farms this summer. Schools are recruiting and selecting the VFV's under direction of the U. S. Office of Education. Extension workers will see to placing them on farms and will keep an eye on the situation after they are placed. Some will volunteer for all-summer work, others for seasonal rushes.

Tuesday. Question Box. "How cook trotters?" Pig's feet, or trotters need long, slow cooking in water. Can also be pickled. Simmer first in salted water until tender, chill, cover with cold vinegar diluted with water. Add seasoning like onion or bay leaves. Good with sauerkraut. Pickled, can be served cold. Ask for Farmers' Bulletin, Pork on the Farm: Killing, curing, and canning. No. 1186, USDA.

"How and where keep a whole ham?" Keep ham with a mild cure in the refrigerator as you do fresh meat. Well-cured ham, such as country-cure or Smithfield style, keep in a dry, dark, well-ventilated, cool place. In warm, moist weather, mold may develop, but usually you can rub or trim it off with no serious loss. Leave wrappings on ham until ready to cook, to prevent insects from getting in.

"What to do about soiled spots on eggshells?" Rub soiled spots with dry rough cloth. Do not wash until just before using. Water removes the protective film that keeps out air and odors.

Wednesday. Food Waste and the War. A study of garbage collection in 48 representative cities showed that food thrown away averaged two-fifths of a pound for each person every day. In a year this amounts to 235 pounds a person. The study in 18 cities showed that 15 percent of all food thrown away by housewives is bread. If each family in the United States threw out just one slice of bread a week, 34 million slices or nearly 2 million loaves would be thrown away. Mold causes much of this waste of bread. Watch your storage. Moisture and heat encourage mold to grow on bread and other food. Take good care of meat, milk, and eggs - three of our most important foods.

Thursday. Question Box. "How weed Victory Garden?" Pull up anything coming up outside the straight line of your row. Common weeds undesirable in your garden, are morning-glory, ragweed, wild garlic, white clover, grasses, and poison ivy. Which is right--sprinkle the garden lightly every evening, wetting all the plants a little, or soaking the ground thoroughly?" One good soaking is worth a dozen light sprinkles. A good way to keep the moisture in the soil is to mulch between your garden rows with straw, dried lawn clippings, leaves, or similar light, dry material. Mulching also keeps down weeds.

"Are bees of any value in my vegetable garden?" Bees are very helpful in the pollination of some garden crops. Bees help the production of seed from cabbage, carrots, collards, kale, onions, peppers, radishes, rutabaga, soybeans, squash,

and turnips. Most fruit trees and strawberries, blackberries, and blueberries need bees to pollinate them. Many other fruit and garden crops depend entirely on bees for pollination, or yield better when bees visit them.

Friday. Some Wartime Cleaning Tips. In wartime most women have less time for house cleaning. Suggestions on how to cut the time: (1) Mobilize the family; (2) Put away all articles and clothing you don't use; (3) Do what you can to keep dirt from getting into the house; (4) Keep your cleaning tools together in a central location or, if your house has more than one floor, have a set of cleaning equipment on each floor if you can. If you must choose between rooms in cleaning, for the sake of family health give the more careful cleaning to the kitchen, bathroom, and baby's room or nursery.

Monday, May 31, 1943. Preserving Early Crops by Freezing. Asparagus, peas, snap beans and greens are among favorite early vegetables for storing in frozen food-locker plants, but through the season you could freeze at least 20 other vegetables successfully. Don't waste locker space by putting in vegetables not of first-rate quality. The fewer hours between picking and freezing, the better. Prepare as if for immediate use, blanch, chill quickly, drain thoroughly, and pack in containers for freezing, and take to the freezer as quickly as possible. If you have to hold them, put them in the refrigerator.

Tuesday. Question Box. "Why do radishes sometimes all go to foliage instead of root?" Perhaps they do not get enough sun, or possibly the soil is too rich in nitrogen. Perhaps they are of a late variety requiring around 75 days to grow.

"Why are some radishes tough?" Usually because they grow too slowly. They need plenty of water, sun, and rich soil. They can't take too much hot weather successfully. Is it true that if pumpkin, cucumber, or melons grow too near one another, they are harmed and the crop is spoiled? Plant scientists say these relatives have no harmful effect on each other, do not cross-pollinate. But they do need a great deal of room. That is why they are not recommended for Victory Gardens where space is small.

"When to dust bean plants - after a shower, or in dry weather?" Dust any time except in windy weather or heavy rain. Damp weather is all right; dust clings to a damp leaf. It's the under side of the leaf you need to dust, for the bean beetle eats from the under side. How store summer squash in the cellar? Summer squash does not store successfully. Ask for USDA Farmers' Bulletin 1939, Home Storage of Vegetables and Fruits.

Wednesday. Our Daily Bread. Man spent a great deal of thought down through the years inventing ways to make wheat flour white but, in doing so, deprived himself of food elements necessary for good health, found in the germ and bran. Greatest losses in milling white flour in 2 B vitamins, thiamin and niacin, and in the mineral, iron. Rice is another illustration of the same thing - how likes in food can go against health. Today you can have white bread and your good health, too, because you can have "enriched" bread and flour - white flour with thiamin, niacin, and iron added. Some enriched flour also contains riboflavin, vitamin D, and calcium, but the law does not require them. If you bake your own bread, be sure to buy enriched flour if you want your family to get full measure of food value from your bread. Dr. Russell M. Wilder, chief of the Civilian Food Requirements branch of the U. S. D. A., says: "It is the job of

every housewife in America to give attention to the nutritive quality of the food she serves her family and thus improve national standards of health."

Thursday. Question Box. "How use early tomatoes?" Plain sliced, stuffed with cottage cheese or cream cheese, sandwiches, cooked in various ways.

"I boiled zinc screw tops of Mason jars in soda and water and the china disk" separated from the zinc screw part. Could the soda have been responsible? Soda dissolves zinc, so boiling in soda water probably caused the parts to separate. It is enough to wash your jars, tops, and rubbers well in clean, hot, soapy water, and then rinse them.

"Are leaves of carrots and turnips good cooked for greens?" The answer is yes for turnip tops, no for carrot tops. Nothing harmful about carrot tops, but the flavor is not good.

Friday. Stretching Your Canning Sugar. Sugar is scarcer this year than last. Some ways to make the most of your canning sugar: Use a sirup made of fruit juice and sugar rather than the usual sirup of water and sugar. Use the softer, riper fruits to make juice. If you haven't enough fruit to use for juice or if the fruit is not juicy enough to give off much juice when precooked, make your own sirup: For thin sirup, 1 cup sugar to 3 cups water; moderately thin, 1 cup sugar to 2 cups water; moderately thick, 1 cup sugar to 1 cup water. Another way to stretch canning sugar--put up some fruit as juice. Still another way--use some mild-flavored sirup like honey or corn sirup along with sugar. You can use honey to replace half the sugar, and corn sirup to replace a third. For stretching sugar in jellies, preserves, and butters: For fruit butters, use a cup of sugar to each quart of fruit pulp. In making jelly, you use a cup of sugar to each cup of fruit juice, so you can get a good deal more in the line of sweet spreads if you put up more fruit butter and marmalade...less jelly and preserves. You can bottle fruit juice and make jelly of it later in the winter when you have some of your regular sugar to use for it. Or you can put up fruit pulp without sugar and later make it into jam.

